



DIVISION OF SCHOOL & DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS

ADVANCING LEADERSHIP | TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS

Advancing Leadership...Transforming Schools

March/April 2016

FROM THE DIVISION

I'm excited about the contents of this current Newsletter. In it you will not only find out about some best practices around Georgia, but also about the processes behind these best practices. And to us, that's key!

Yes, it's critical that schools and districts have effective teachers and leaders in place. However, as Deming suggested, "a bad system will beat a good person every time." The way schools and districts improve is to create, implement, monitor, and improve the systems, processes, procedures, and practices of the organization.

Furthermore, the axiom is indeed true that if something isn't written down, it does not exist. So, a major emphasis you will see and hear from our Division of School and District Effectiveness, and you will see in the [Georgia School Performance Standards](#) and [Georgia District Performance Standards](#), is that processes must be documented in order to align them, to meet organizational goals, to show what works, and to improve so that things work even better going forward.

In addition to the emphasis you will hear from us about processes and systems being in place, you will also begin soon to hear from our Division more about balanced leadership practices and about intentional collaborative communities of practices (PLCs). Schools and districts will experience a quantum leap forward with these three concepts fully developed: effective and balanced leadership, from the principal to the administrative team to the leadership team; adults who meet together regularly around the real work of learning and teaching (PLCs); and everyone who influences a school or district thinks, plans, and works from a systems-perspective.

Enjoy reading about the work of your colleagues and how they are achieving it (and undoubtedly improving it).

[Dr. Will Rumbaugh](#)

Director, Division of School & District Effectiveness

CONTENTS

Letter From the Director	1
ESSA Update	1
Reading and Resources	2
Professional Learning	3
1003(a) School Improvement Updates	3
SIG 1003(g) Updates	3
Region News	4-7

PURPOSE

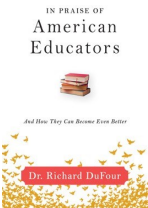
The purpose of this newsletter is to provide school and district leaders with just-in-time information for issues surrounding continuous improvement and to celebrate the great work occurring in the State's six Regions.

ESSA UPDATE

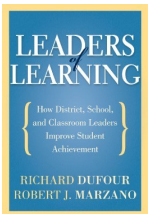
The National Conference of State Legislatures provided a [quick summary](#) of Title I-IX of ESSA. Below are a few comments about Title I, Part A (School Improvement) only:

- After passage of ESSA, little guidance has come from US ED
- After guidance arrives, Georgia will write its plan to be authorized by US ED by next Spring/Summer (current school designations will remain in place until Georgia's plan is approved)
- Work with new schools (to be called "comprehensive" and "targeted" schools) will begin Fall 2017
- Funds/programs will no longer be divided into 1003(a) and 1003(g)-SIG, but now will be 1003 funding/programming
- Current SIG schools will sunset (Cohort 3 by September 2016, Cohort 4 by September 2017)
- Under ESSA, Districts will develop plans for their schools' improvements, and the GaDOE will support the districts

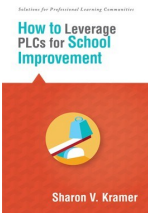
RECOMMENDED READING



[In Praise of American Educators](#) by Richard DuFour



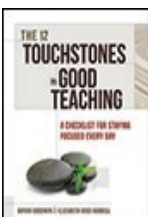
[Leaders of Learning: How District, School, and Classroom Leaders Improve Student Achievement](#) by Richard DuFour and Robert Marzano



[How to Leverage PLCs for School Improvement](#) by Sharon V. Kramer



[Simply Better: Doing What Matters Most to Change the Odds for Student Success](#) by Bryan Goodwin



[The 12 Touchstones of Good Teaching: A Checklist for Staying Focused Every Day](#) by Bryan Goodwin and Elizabeth Ross Hubbell



[Spotlight on Differentiated Instruction](#) by Education Week

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[A MODEL SYSTEM FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL INSTRUCTION](#)

How would you define “Instructional System”? How would your faculty describe the instructional system in your school? Is your instructional system written or implied? Just as athletic coaches have playbooks to guide players on the field, so too should school leaders have a written system for instruction to guide faculty members in following consistent and pervasive instructional practices.

The purpose of the Model System for Effective School Instruction (SESI) is to provide school leaders with an exemplar system to either create or refine their own processes for planning, implementing, monitoring, and assessing research-based curriculum, assessment and instructional practices. Our model includes a “Self-Assessment Checklist” for use by school leadership teams to conduct a needs assessment of current instructional processes within the school’s system.

SESI can be found at www.tinyurl.com/GaDOESESI or under the “Continuous Improvement Toolbox” on the left-hand side of the [School and District Effectiveness webpage](#). Priority and Focus Schools can also access SESI through the QCIS (Indistar) platform. Principals, Process Managers, and district support personnel can now find a link to SESI on the school's "My Dashboard" page under the "Docs & Links" tab.

[NEW SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING TEMPLATE](#)

The updated [School Improvement Planning Template](#) can be found under the [School Improvement Planning Packet](#) section of the [SDE webpage](#). In an effort to make it more user-friendly for school leadership, this new template can accommodate the previous requirements of several plans (School Improvement, Title I, Professional Learning).



DIVISION OF SCHOOL & DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS

ADVANCING LEADERSHIP | TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

AREA INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

The Area Instructional Leadership Conferences (ILCs) took place on February 24 and 25 at the Decatur Courtyard Marriott and the Macon City Center Marriott. Thank you for your participation and feedback! The presentations and materials from the Area ILCs can be found on the right-hand side of the School and District Effectiveness [Events and Conferences webpage](#) under “Past Events and Conferences.”

PRINCIPAL-TO-PRINCIPAL WEBINAR SERIES

The third webinar in the Principal-to-Principal Webinar Series occurred on March 9, 2016. Thank you to Dr. Jasmine Kullar of Pine Mountain Middle School for an excellent presentation on professional learning communities and research-based instructional practices! The [recording](#) and supporting documents from this webinar, along with the [schedule of future webinars](#), are located on the right-hand side of the School and District Effectiveness [Professional Learning webpage](#). The next webinar will take place on April 13, 2016, and will focus on monitoring implementation of the school improvement plan. Dr. Julia Daniely, Principal of Westside High School in Bibb County, will be our presenter. An email registration link will be sent to school leaders one week in advance of the webinar.

1003(a) UPDATES

1003(a) SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING

Award of Grants: The Title I, Part A, Section 1003(a) grants are awarded for the 2015 – 2016 school year. The expectation is that all funds awarded this year are used during this school year and summer 2016. All funds must be expended no later than September 30, 2016. There is no carryover of the FY16 funds.

In order to ensure timely spending and drawdown of federal funds, the following milestones have been established:

- By March 30, 2016, each LEA expends at least 60% of its awarded Title I, Part A, 1003(a) funds

1003(a) UPDATES (continued)

- By May 30, 2016, each LEA expends at least 80% of its awarded Title I, Part A, 1003(a) funds
- By September 30, 2016, each LEA must have expended 100% of its awarded Title I, Part A, 1003(a) funds

Feedback will be provided to districts in terms of percentage of drawdowns at each established milestone related to spending.

SIG 1003(g) END-OF-YEAR

SIG 1003(g) - MAXIMIZING EFFORTS

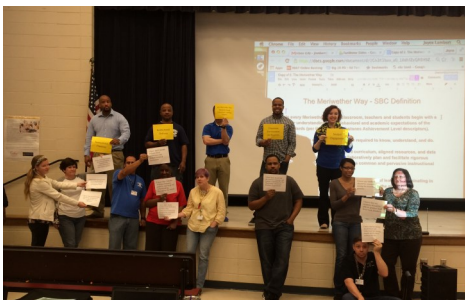
Spring ushers in the final days of school that are busy with teaching and learning, testing and assessments, teacher evaluations, surveys, state monitoring, spring breaks, impending graduation, etc. As schools get closer to wrapping up the year, the urgency increases to ensure all goals are met. Each SIG 1003(g) school should take time to reflect on progress made toward the initiatives of the improvement grant while maintaining a focus on what must be done before the sun sets on this school year. The purchase of all equipment, supplies, programs, and materials has been completed by this time, and the focus should be on utilizing those pieces to maximize student gains. With only a few weeks of school remaining, SIG schools should be progressing well toward developing initiatives and expending budgets. The expectation for the budget is that 70% of the FY16 award be expended by May 20th. While spring may bring about a sense of urgency in regard to making the most of instructional time before the school year ends, it also is a time to plan for summer programs, professional learning, and the upcoming school year. SIG schools and their respective staffs can never let up because school improvement is an ongoing process. Therefore, it is important to remain focused while maximizing time this spring to ensure a strong finish.

FROM THE REGIONS

In July 2015, the Division of School and District Effectiveness underwent re-structuring to better meet the needs of our schools and districts throughout the state. This resulted in the creation of six collaborative regions. Click [here](#) to view these new regions. Below are news and notes from each Region.

NORTHWEST REGION

There is a lot of great work happening in the Northwest Region. We want to thank all of our Priority and SIG schools for great monitoring visits in January and February. There have been many excellent professional learning opportunities, including our North Area Instructional Leadership Conference and the Assessment Symposium offered by Northwest Georgia RESA.



Meriwether County Schools Professional Learning Session

Meriwether County Schools has partnered with [West Georgia RESA](#) to define what effective instruction looks like in their school district. Instructional staff from the county met at Greenville Middle/High School for a day of professional learning where the district shared common expectations around standards-based instruction and the specific behaviors, “look-fors,” and common language that defined [“The Meriwether Way.”](#) Departments and grade level teams spent the morning hearing about the expectations for instruction and teacher behaviors. During the afternoon session, teachers used the GaDOE Achievement Level Descriptors to look at standards and identify what the expectations would be in their classroom. The superintendent was engaged in the learning and sent a strong message of high expectations and support as they begin this journey together, ensuring consistency and monitoring of “The Meriwether Way.” The district is working with West Georgia RESA to

NORTHWEST REGION (continued)

set up model classrooms in each school and as a next step teachers will participate as students in a model standards-based lesson and then engage in peer observations to identify opportunities for summer professional learning. For more information, please contact Rachel Spates at rspates@garesa.org.

[Southwest High Magnet and Law Academy](#) has started the Lexile Leaps Challenge. Realizing that reading comprehension is the foundational skill to all learning, the instructional team administered the AIMSWEB Test to the entire school to gather Lexile scores. Professional learning was provided for all teachers and support staff on Lexile scores and how to best support their students in increasing their scores. Every student was given their Lexile score during advisement and given an opportunity to learn how to track their own progress and use their Lexile score to their benefit. The [College and Career Readiness Lexile Band chart](#) is displayed throughout the building, along with posters that encourage the Lexile Leaps Challenge. For more information, please contact Literacy Coach Karen Brooks at Karen.Brooks@bcsdk12.net.

NORTHEAST REGION

The Northeast Region mid-year state monitoring sessions indicated overall progress in leadership team development, the design of local school processes and protocols, routinized administration and district/local school collaboration, and leaders who have collaboratively created a vision of what needs to happen to improve learning.

In an effort to improve the transfer of Professional Learning (PL) to daily classroom practice, [Taliaferro County Elementary School](#) is piloting a more intensive PL approach in grades K-5. In collaboration with school and district leaders, RESA, and GaDOE, a “Blitz” reading PL week has been designed for the first week of April. For five days each K-5 teacher will have a one-on-one reading coach for a half day. The side-by-side coach will use a gradual release format beginning with planning and modeling and by week’s end the teacher will conduct guided reading groups and will receive feedback from the coach. The co-teachers and school administrators will also participate. For more information, please contact Principal Ronald Lewis at rlewis@taliaferro.k12.ga.us.

NORTHEAST REGION (continued)

The principals, APs, and instructional coaches at [Wilkinson County Primary School](#), [Wilkinson County Elementary School](#), and [Midway Elementary School](#) (Baldwin County) have conducted in-depth one-on-one mid-year meetings with each teacher to review student reading progress. These meetings lasting one hour or more allowed the teacher and leaders to review individual student data. These meetings helped the team of administrators ascertain how well individual students in each classroom are progressing and how well each teacher is meeting the needs of their students in reading. Next steps for teachers and students were determined. In some cases, meetings were followed by classroom observations of the entire reading lesson in order to determine reading lesson effectiveness. All local school leaders stated that these meetings were exceptionally beneficial for monitoring student reading progress and for determining the on-going effectiveness of the reading instruction in each classroom. For more information, please contact Principal Judith Geter at Judith.geter@wilkinson.k12.ga.us.

WEST METRO REGION

The Metro Area Instructional Leadership Conference (ILC), held on February 25th, was a huge success due to the active engagement of district and school leaders throughout the day. The ILC provided school and district leaders with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of what rigorous instruction requires of teachers and students and provided practical strategies and processes to support and monitor teachers as they engage students in rigorous learning experiences. Kudos to many of our district leaders who were involved in leading several of these valuable sessions!

[McClarín Success Academy](#) – Celebrating Success in the third year of the School Improvement Grant! The enthusiasm and focus on student achievement in their building is contagious; the results equal student success!

“The introduction of the Student Circle of Support Team Concept—the SST or Dream Team as we call it—included the counselors, attendance specialist, social worker, graduation coach, and parent/community liaison. The team facilitated the review of the student achievement data and comprehensive needs assessment. Based on the

WEST METRO REGION (continued)

data, they designed a holistic approach to the evaluation of student achievement. The students’ discipline and attendance data was drilled down to the individual student level. As a result of this data analysis, McClarin implemented what is now known as Operation Graduation. Operation Graduation was a strategic breakdown of the entire population of the school based on cohort. A personal profile was developed for each student. The students were tracked and assigned priorities based on their risk level towards graduation.”

-Dr. Woodley



Dr. Lateshia Woodley and Dr. Kemi Popoola with the Metro Area Program Manager, Dr. Samuel Taylor, celebrating the number of students “on track” for graduation!

Tracking each student in Cohort 2016 on a data wall is a team effort! Students are encouraged to develop plan “A” for their progress toward college and career readiness. They are also encouraged to have a Plan B and Plan C just in case life interferes with Plan A!

EAST METRO REGION

The current foundation of the work in our East Metro Priority and Focus schools is Georgia School Performance Standards, Curriculum Standard 1: Uses systematic, collaborative planning processes so that teachers share an understanding of expectations for standards, curriculum, assessment, and instruction. Based on state monitoring data and self-assessment data, all of our schools have made this standard their top priority. Our [MRESA](#) team has responded to this need within DeKalb County Schools by providing clear guidance and professional learning on the collaborative planning process.

EAST METRO REGION (continued)

Some of our Priority schools, such as [Peachcrest Elementary](#), have embraced a self-assessment of their current practices in order to determine next steps. Using the [GaDOE Collaborative Planning Rubric](#), each grade level team at Peachcrest Elementary self-assessed their current practices. The Metro East School Effectiveness Specialist team observed each collaborative planning session to determine strengths within the current practices and planning processes. The team then interviewed each certified staff member about the current practices of the collaborative planning process, collecting data such as “What is the major focus of your work during collaborative planning?” and “What do you think should be done differently within your collaborative planning?” This collection of data has been gathered and provided to Dr. Sheila Nelloms, Peachcrest Elementary School’s principal.



Fifth grade teachers at Peachcrest Elementary School engage in collaborative planning data talks.

Dr. Nelloms and the Leadership Team will review the data directly from the staff to determine what is and what is not currently working within the collaborative planning process at Peachcrest as it aligns to the School Curriculum Standard 1. The team will review the research behind the standard and the alignment of the process to the standard. They can then develop a new protocol based on the data to fine tune the process and improve teaching and learning. The Metro East team is working with our schools to have the tools they need to implement a rigorous planning process to the intent of the school standards. For more information about this work, please contact Principal Sheila Nelloms at Sheila_nelloms@dekalbschoolsga.org.

SOUTHWEST REGION

School and district leaders came together in Macon on February 25 for the South Area Instructional Leadership Conference. Dr. Jan Reyes, an assessment specialist in the GaDOE Office of Assessment Research, Development, and Administration, facilitated the morning session in which participants reviewed implications for student achievement in 2015 Milestones results. In an afternoon session, Bobby Smith provided a comprehensive overview of CCRPI components and shared tools and resources schools and districts may use in developing improvement plans. Following each session, participants had the opportunity to plan next steps to be implemented at the school and district level related to the professional learning provided.



Monroe Comprehensive High School students printing T-Shirts

In other Southwest Region news, [Monroe Comprehensive High School](#) students in the Entrepreneurship Pathway are using the Anajet Sprint Direct and Garment t-shirt printer to create, design, and market t-shirts. This equipment was purchased through the School Improvement Grant. This equipment enables students to manage a school based enterprise called Ponderosa T-Shirt Printing Company. Through the buying and selling of goods, students are learning business, marketing, and advertising skills. Students manage expenses, and profits are used to finance regional and state FBLA competitions. The SIG Grant also provided funding for the project-based learning PLC, summer professional learning for teachers, a summer STEM camp for students, and allowed teachers and students to engage in research-based projects. For more information, please contact Sonya May at Sonya.may@docoschools.org.

SOUTHEAST REGION

Southeast Region Network Professional Learning meetings have taken place each month. Collaborative Planning has been the primary focus of the sessions. Many schools have identified that their collaborative meetings have become much more structured with emphasis being placed on outcomes of standards, alignment of tasks to standards, and more rigorous assessments.

After each network professional learning session, a summary of the network with expectations for next steps is sent to participants and principals. As DOE SESs and RESA SISs support the learning during visits to the schools, the work is being monitored to ensure transfer of learning is taking place. The following are school implementation examples of network learning (e.g., what makes an effective lesson, protocols to use during collaborative, and how to monitor student growth):

A great big “Shout Out” to [Wilcox County High School](#). Chad Davis, principal of both the high school and middle school, developed a lesson planning process in January. Mr. Davis, along with his two assistant principals, Nathan Gibbs and Tim Connor, created a rubric to evaluate lesson plans, and feedback is given to each teacher. Every week the highest scoring department is rewarded with gift cards. In addition, the highest scoring teacher of the week also receives a gift card. However, the buck does not stop there! Mr. Davis and his team monitor the fidelity of the implementation of the lesson plans with weekly focus walks. The results have been amazing with full engagement from all the teachers.

[Moore Street School](#) has taken steps to empower students to monitor their own academic progress and behavior. A student form was developed for students to be able to identify work needing to be completed, work completed, and academic and behavioral goals for the next week. Teachers conference with students on a weekly basis to help them monitor their own work. All teachers are working toward making self-efficacy a priority in their school.

SOUTHEAST REGION (continued)

The [School of Liberal Studies at Savannah High School](#) began professional learning focusing on collaborative planning earlier in the year. Instructional coaches have modeled what this planning should look like and attend the individual collaborative planning sessions. Coaches then monitor the implementation of the collaborative planning with focus walks. [The Tuning Protocol](#) has been used within the collaboratives to engage teachers in examining lesson activities and student work. As a result of this good work, significant progress in the collaborative planning process has been made.



Southeast Region Network Professional Learning Session in Savannah.

We want to hear from you! Please send your ideas for future editions of the newsletter to Andrea Cruz at acruz@doe.k12.ga.us.